



## **Mumps Outbreak in the Midwest**

**By Dr. Matthew Zahn, Medical Director**

An outbreak of mumps has been identified in multiple Midwestern states. Over 1000 cases have occurred since December of 2005, primarily in Iowa, but also in Illinois, Indiana, Kansas, Michigan, Minnesota, Missouri, Nebraska, and Wisconsin. No cases have been identified in Kentucky, but with multiple bordering states now seeing cases, it is likely that mumps will occur in Kentucky. The majority of cases thus far have been identified in those 18-25, in particular students, faculty, and health care and other workers in colleges and other post-high school educational institutions.

### **What is Mumps?**

Mumps is an illness caused by the mumps virus. Symptoms of a mumps infection often begin with headache, fever, cough and body aches. After a few days **parotitis** develops. Parotitis is a painful swelling of the parotid glands, which are located on the jaw below the ears. However, this parotitis only occurs in one half to two thirds of those with mumps. Up to one in five people will have no symptoms when they are infected with mumps, and many people will have complaints other than parotitis as their primary symptoms.

Most people who have a mumps infection have these symptoms resolve without any other problems. About 5 percent of patients experience meningitis. Orchitis, or inflammation of the testicles, can occur in some adult men, but sterility is extremely rare.

### **Mumps Prevention**

Two doses of mumps vaccine (usually as part of the MMR vaccine) is the best method of preventing infection. Over 90 percent of those who receive two doses of MMR vaccine will be immune to mumps. The standard age for receiving MMR doses is at 12-15 months and 4-6 years of age.

**Immunity**

Students and employees associated with colleges and other post-high school educational institutions and health care workers in particular should be documented to have immunity to mumps.

You are also considered immune if:

- you have received two doses of MMR vaccine,
- a physician has diagnosed you with mumps in the past
- you have had a blood test showing mumps immunity
- you were born before 1957

**Can you be tested for mumps infection?**

Yes. Mumps virus can be tested for by a blood test and by a swab of the cheek inside the mouth. Anyone suspected of having mumps should undergo both tests.

**If you have any questions, please contact the Communicable Disease Division of the Louisville Metro Health Department at 502-574-6570.**

Find more detailed information on mumps, [click here](#).